

# European Community

## News Release

### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PRESIDENT VISITS UNITED STATES

Madame Simone Veil, President of the first directly-elected European Parliament is leading a 23-member parliamentary delegation to the United States from 28 January to 1 February.

During a series of meetings with leading American figures, including U.S. President Jimmy Carter and National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, Madame Veil discussed the evolution of the European Parliament and the enlarged prospects it enjoys for becoming a significant social and political force in Europe now that its members are elected by universal suffrage. She pointed to the recent European Parliament resolution on Iran in support of international efforts to secure the release of American hostages in Teheran who continue to be held in defiance of all accepted norms of international law. In addition, she discussed the recent European Parliament resolution which condemned Soviet aggression in Afghanistan and which urged European Community member countries to reconsider the sending of their national teams to compete in the Moscow Olympics.

President Carter stressed his admiration for the strength and vigor with which the European Parliament is addressing major issues of the day, and he reiterated U.S. interest in maintaining close contacts with this evolving institution. In that connection, the President and Madame Veil agreed on the desirability of intensifying transatlantic cooperation in the fields of trade and energy, a development which would accord with the Parliament's growing interest in international affairs.

Madame Veil expressed her personal appreciation for the forcefulness of the President's state of the union message and felt that a great number of Europeans felt as she did.

On 28 January, Madame Veil addressed the National Press Club in Washington. Here are excerpts from this major speech:

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"I shall not hide the emotion which I feel, as the first President of the directly-elected European Parliament, being today in front of the National Press Club of the United States, that is, in front of an assembly of journalists who, to my mind, incarnate the most vigorous and independent expression of liberty in the capital of a country which for two centuries has not ceased to defend and exemplify democracy.

"Indeed for two centuries, relations between Europe and the United States, who share, on both sides of the Atlantic, the same fundamental values of civilization, have been marked by a common and stubborn will to preserve this ideal of liberty, and our two continents have known how to unite to defend it whenever it has been threatened.

"By creating a Parliament elected directly by the European people, nine European states have voiced their desire that the Community should be not only an organ for economic cooperation but also a political reality, capable of contributing - through the interplay of the European institutions - to the strengthening of democracy in Europe.

"It was certainly no mere chance that this first election of the European Parliament took place at a time when Europe was finding it hard to progress and was seeking to catch its breath. It is important for the world's security that the citizens of Europe are able to make themselves heard with a single voice, at the same time that détente and peace appear to be threatened...

"At a time when Europe's future is once again, closely tied to the state of the international situation, one cannot imagine that the Parliament could have failed to focus its attention on this situation. Europe is, like her partners, confronted with formidable challenges, not only as far as the economy is concerned, but also as regards peace; and Europe will be able to take up these challenges only if she is united and if she is conscious of the importance of her ties with her main partners.

"Such is the case with the United States, which is our most important economic and trading partner. The United States belongs to the small number of countries who believe in democracy and liberty. This is why the European Parliament accords the utmost importance to relations between Europe and the United States. Parliament itself has arranged these contacts with Congress. It is the reason why I have deemed it indispensable to lead the first delegation to the United States since the elections.

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"It is quite clear that neither Europe nor the United States can act without taking into account the situation and the interests of the other party...

"As regards energy, the need to take account of our inter-dependance is obvious: Europe's efforts to limit her consumption and reduce her imports of oil will be that much more serious and effective if all industrialized countries, and especially the United States, participate in these efforts...

"And finally, as regards peace, our destinies are closely linked. The European parliamentarians have shown that they understand this very well, by their swift reactions to the events in Iran and Afghanistan. In both cases the Parliament has taken the firmest and least ambiguous stand possible. Thus, during its last session two weeks ago, a resolution was adopted by a majority of the members inviting the Commission of the European Community to reconsider immediately all relations between the USSR and the EC - in matters of economics, trade, finance and credit. In this resolution, the Parliament also invited the Olympic authorities to reconsider whether it is appropriate to organize the summer games in Moscow if the occupation of Afghanistan continues.

"Finally, I believe it is useful to underline that the European Parliament is of the opinion that it has a special vocation to be the spokesman for the defense of human rights. The Parliament represents in fact the people of nine of the oldest democratic countries in the world, countries which continue to guarantee human rights in their entirety. This is the reason why, since the month of July, the Parliament has taken up the issues of Cambodians threatened with genocide, Czechoslovaks condemned and imprisoned without recourse, and the American hostages in Teheran.

"At the present time, when peace appears to be more fragile than at any other time in a generation, it is not too much to affirm that the new European Parliament - precisely because it reflects the belief in liberty of some 260 million Europeans - is an important factor in the safeguarding of a civilization which, on both sides of the Atlantic, is our most precious possession."

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